

Early English language learning materials in Finland

Action-based exercises in *Jump in* and *Go*

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<p>Tiivistelmä - Referat - Abstract</p> <p>Tutkielma käsittelee toiminnallisia tehtäviä varhennetun englannin opetukseen suunnatuissa oppikirjoissa <i>Jump in</i> ja <i>Go</i>. Vuosiluokkien 1-2 A1-kielen opetussuunnitelman perusteissa korostetaan, että opetuksessa tulisi korostua toiminnallisuus ja työtavoissa tulisi yhdistyä leikinomaisuus, musiikki, draama, pelit ja liike sekä eri aistien hyödyntäminen. Tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää, miten paljon ja millaisia toiminnallisia tehtäviä varhennetun englannin oppimateriaaleissa on, sekä millaisia elementtejä nämä toiminnalliset tehtävät sisältävät. Aiemmat tutkimukset ovat osoittaneet, että toiminnalliset työtavat voivat tukea oppimista ja ovat myös varhennettua kieltä opettavien opettajien suosimia tehtävätyyppejä.</p> <p>Aineistona tutkimuksessa käytettiin Otavan <i>Jump in</i> -oppimateriaalia sekä Sanoma Pron <i>Go</i> -oppimateriaalia, jotka on molemmat suunnattu varhennetun englannin opetukseen. Tutkielmassa analysoitiin oppilaille tarkoitettuja oppikirjoja sekä opettajan digiopetusmateriaalia, mutta vain oppikirjojen sisältämät tehtävät analysoitiin yksityiskohtaisesti. Oppikirjojen toiminnalliset tehtävät analysoitiin fokusoiden niiden sisällöllisiin elementteihin. Analysoidut sisältöelementit olivat liike, musiikki, kirjoittaminen, lukeminen, draama sekä värittäminen/piirtäminen. Pelit luokiteltiin toiminnallisiksi tehtäviksi, mutta ne analysoitiin erikseen niiden suuren määrän vuoksi.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen pohjalta voidaan todeta, että molemmat oppimateriaalit sisälsivät toiminnallisia tehtäviä, mutta tehtävät ja niiden elementit olivat erilaisia. Liike ja puhuminen olivat yleisimmät elementit toiminnallisissa tehtävissä, kun taas peleissä puhuminen oli yleisin elementti. Oppimateriaalien välillä oli myös eroavaisuuksia, sillä <i>Go</i> -oppikirjan toiminnalliset tehtävät sisälsivät enemmän draamaelementtejä, kun taas <i>Jump in</i> -oppikirja otti paremmin huomioon oppilaat, joiden lukutaito ei ole vielä vahva.</p>			
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1 Introduction

In most Finnish schools A1 language learning has traditionally started in the 3rd grade. In September 2018, the Finnish government decided to increase the distribution of lesson hours in primary schools in order to add A1 language learning for all 1st and 2nd graders. According to the Finnish National Agency of Education the aims of this education policy is to add, develop and diversify language learning in early childhood education and primary school education (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2019). According to the Finnish National Agency of Education, these aims are supported by positive findings on the benefits of early language learning and research suggesting that learners from early childhood to adolescence are most apt to learn and acquire specific linguistic features due to sensitivity periods occurring in early childhood to adolescence. The amendments and additions to the national core curriculum for basic education 2014 regarding the instruction of the A1 language in grades 1-2 were issued in the spring of 2019, and the education policy is due to become nationwide by the spring term of 2020 when the new curriculum must be implemented (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2019).

A nationwide education reform is not a simple one to accomplish since it requires time for the teachers, pupils, parents and publishers to adjust to. Therefore, various early language teaching projects were piloted in schools across Finland before the policy was made nationwide. In a study about these early language learning projects (Huhta & Leontjev, 2019) some teachers reported that even though they viewed early language teaching positively, they were disappointed with the lack of materials and training provided for teachers. Most teachers also highlighted that early language learning should be fun for the children and not performance oriented. Action-based teaching methods are highlighted in the 2019 revised curriculum for A1 language teaching. In addition to action-based methods, the importance of songs, drama, rhymes and movement in early language learning is emphasized in the curriculum.

Due to the new education policy and the new revised curriculum, some publishers have published learning materials that are aimed for these young language learners. In this master's thesis I will be analysing two early English language learning materials *Jump in* by Otava and *Go* by Sanoma Pro in order to find out whether the guidelines and teaching methods highlighted in the curriculum are present in these two learning materials. The focus of my analysis is on the action-based exercises provided in the materials. I will analyse the nature of the action-based exercises to find out what pedagogical elements are featured in them (e.g. songs, rhymes, movement, drama). The topic is worth researching, since the early language education policy is a fairly new phenomenon and the materials used in early language teaching have not yet been studied enough. Therefore, in this study I will try to answer the following questions:

- 1.) What kind of action-based exercises are provided in the *Jump in* and *Go* early English language learning materials?
- 2.) What pedagogical elements are most prominent in the action-based exercises?
- 3.) How do the two learning materials differ from each other?

In addition to analysing the elements that are featured in the action-based exercises, I will study the accessibility of the materials and their exercises. Since the two materials are targeted for learners as young as six years old who are still low-level readers and writers, the design of both of the materials should be different to that of a third-grade book. I will thus analyse how many of the action-based exercises require reading and writing skills to see how the authors have taken the young learners into account when designing the materials. The classroom activities and materials are worth analysing from the young learners' point of view to assess whether pupils will understand the language and what they are expected to do. After analysing both of the materials I will compare the two to see if and how they differ from each other.

2 Theoretical Background

According to various studies and earlier research on second language learning, language learning is often considered to be easier and quicker amongst young learners than adults (Nikolov 2009; Singleton & Ryan 2004). It is important to study the methods that are the most beneficial for learners, since this way teachers can implement the most effective methods and materials in the classrooms. Foreign language programmes are becoming more and more popular and children are starting to learn English at a young age globally (Cameron, 2003). Due to this, an increasing number of learning materials are produced for young learners.

2.1 Early English language learning

Most young children can pick up languages almost effortlessly and with success, whereas for older learners acquiring a foreign language is often more time consuming. The Critical period hypothesis (CPH) in first and second language acquisition is often referred to when discussing the age factor for acquiring languages (Nikolov, 2009). If children are provided with essential linguistic stimuli the critical period hypothesis states that there is a limited ideal time window for a child to acquire a language, and once this window has passed, acquiring a language and achieving a native-like accent becomes harder. However, CPH is a topic of ongoing debate in the field of linguistics and researchers have varied views on the duration of the critical periods, and in addition, a variety of views have been expressed on whether children are more efficient and effective second language learners than adults, or on the contrary that adults are more effective second language learners than children. According to Nikolov (2009, 5) “Adults progress at early stages of morphology and syntax faster than children, older children acquire faster than younger children and child starters outperform adult starters in the long run.” She also goes on to point out that most decision makers and parents seem to be aware of only the third point and mistakenly assume that young learners always develop fast, even though the young age means the slower progress according to empirical studies. Research on early language learning has been conducted around the world (Nikolov 2009; Huhta & Leontjev 2019; Uysal & Yavuz 2015), but what constitutes as ELL in different contexts

varies. In some countries ELL can mean beginning foreign language learning in elementary school as opposed to adolescence. In the Finnish context ELL usually means beginning English in the first or second grade as opposed to the standard EFL starting time in the third grade (Metsälä, 2017). The most relevant ELL studies from the perspective of this thesis are based on teacher interviews, pupil interviews, classroom observations and teaching material analyses.

When early second language teaching is taking place in the school setting there are a variety of methods, models and programmes that can be implemented. The second language may be taught for example through monolingual education, when all teaching is conducted in the target language, the CLIL method (content and language integrated learning) or the immersion method (Metsälä, 2017). The most common model is arguably foreign language learning in basic education programmes, where languages are taught and treated as regular subjects in school. In these cases, learners are exposed to the language for a limited time per week as the rest of their schooling happens in their mother tongue. Compared to other languages that are taught in Finnish schools like German and French, English has a predominant status since Finnish children have usually been exposed to English even before starting their language studies. English is immersing us through society, media, news, immigration and popular culture.

According to Pinter (2001, 7) “Second language learning in schools should not be seen as an isolated process but instead as closely intertwined with cognitive development, learning about the world and developing as a person”. Pinter’s argument is applicable to the Finnish context of early language learning, since from 2020 onwards Finnish pupils as young as six are starting A1-language studies, whilst still adjusting to the new school environment and all the elements that come along with it. One of the objectives of early language learning in Finland is to introduce and motivate the child to learn the new language in addition to finding ways to connect the language to their environment and world surrounding them (NCC, 2020).

2.2 Action-based teaching

The aforementioned teaching and learning methods in the NCC, such as singing, playing, games, drama, rhyming and a movement are all methods that are applicable to a classroom of young learners of whom most are still learning to read and write. One of the most prominent concepts of the 2019 revised curriculum and the 2014 curriculum is action-based learning or “toiminnallisuus” in Finnish. The term is not an easy one to define, since it is used rather ambiguously and broadly in the curriculum and in previous studies internationally. Action-based teaching often includes at least one of the aforementioned methods; singing, playing, games, drama, rhyming and/or movement. Van Lier (2007) defines action-based teaching as “an approach to teaching that puts human agency in the centre of attention”. As van Lier points out (2007, 48) action-based teaching and learning are closely connected to a variety of established approaches where the emphasis is on the learner as an active agent, such as task-based, content-based, project-based, exploratory and experiential approaches. Van Lier also brings to attention that “the focus in second language studies has gradually shifted from linguistic inputs and mental information processing to the things that learners do and say while engaged in meaningful activity”.

The learner’s previous experiences, feelings, senses and physical action are utilized in action-based teaching to create new knowledge (Pukkila, 2019). According to Pukkila (2019), action-based learning is the learner’s active participation and active thinking in the learning process. Kinesthetic learning is an important aspect of action-based learning as well as experiential learning methods. The learner constructs the new knowledge and creates meaning based on his or her previous knowledge (Öystilä, 2003). Luostarinen and Peltomaa (2016 cited in Pukkila, 2019, p.15) elaborate that action-based learning can be independent work or group or pair work, and it can happen in the classroom or outside of it. The idea behind action-based teaching is to add variation and diversity into teaching methods, learning environments and learning tools. Kettunen and Laine (cited in Pukkila, 2019, p.18) emphasize that action-based learning can mean different things for different ages, since in early education action-based learning often refers to games, stories and playing, whereas for older students action-based learning is examining phenomena through cross-curricular and exploratory learning methods

2.3 National core curriculum

The national core curriculum sets guidelines on how much resources and weekly lesson hours are given to each subject, what topics and themes should be included, what kind of learning goals are set, what teaching methods should be used and what kind of materials ought to be implemented in Finnish schools. The NCC is the most important document that guides public and private education as well as authors, publishers and teachers. The early language education policy refers to the two weekly lessons of A1 language teaching that were added to the distribution of lesson hours in the spring term of 2020 for all Finnish 1st and 2nd graders (NCC, 2020).

The national core curriculum for basic education was revised in the spring of 2019 when additions and amendments were made, adding more specific guidelines and goals for A1 language teaching in grades 1-2. As the language learners are now as young as 6-7 years old and some are still learning to read and write, the teaching methods and materials ought to differ from those that are implemented in grade 3 and onwards. In addition, the primary task of assessment conducted during the school year is to motivate and guide learning through encouraging feedback (NCC 2020, 29).

The following sentence is stated as one of the objectives of the subject.

In grades 1-2, the special task of instructions of foreign languages and Sami language is to kindle a positive attitude toward learning languages as well as to strengthen pupils' confidence in their own abilities to learn languages and use their language skills confidently, even if they are limited... Instruction places an emphasis on the joy of learning, varied and action-oriented working methods, and spoken interaction in everyday situations (NCC 2020, 25).

The following is mentioned about interaction skills and the content areas related to the objectives:

Vocabulary and structures are practised as phrases by way of, for example songs, play, drama and games (NCC 2020, 27).

The following is mentioned about interpreting and producing text and the content areas related to the objectives:

Pupils practise listening and observing target language pronunciation, word and sentence stress, rhythm and intonation, by means of, for example, songs, play, nursery rhymes, stories and images. Vocabulary and structures are practised in situations familiar to the pupils by way of, for example, images, songs, play, nursery rhymes, stories, drama and games (NCC 2020, 27-28).

The following is stated about the objectives related to the learning environments and working methods:

Working methods must be diverse, pupil-centred and engaging. The selection of working methods should be based on action-oriented and exploratory learning. Working methods combine playfulness, music, drama, games, motion and multisensory learning (NCC 2020, 28-29).

As illustrated by the extracts, diverse pedagogic elements are highlighted in the curriculum and learning is encouraged to occur through playing and speaking, but little emphasis is put on writing and reading. According to the curriculum, the pupils' interest in spoken and written language, as well as reading and writing is sparked and further increased. It is also stated in the NCC (2020, 25) that "At the beginning of instructions, pupils are not required to know how to read and write".

The curriculum for A1 language teaching for 1st and 2nd graders (2020) emphasizes that action-based learning should be the basis of every teaching method used in early language teaching. The prevalent view that children learn best by doing, experiencing and playing, rather than sitting down and writing for long periods of time, something that is expected from older language learners, has thus crept its way to the curriculum.

2.3.1 Learning through movement

Psychology professor James Asher has developed a language teaching method called Total Physical Response (TPR), which attempts to teach language through speech and physical activity (Asher & Price, 1967). The benefits of using TPR in a foreign language classroom with young learners are understandable, since the method is built around teaching language through physical activity and as concluded previously, children construct their knowledge and understanding of the world and languages through experiencing and doing (Uysal & Yavuz, 2015). Children can understand complex utterances without being able to produce them. The TPR method does not require a lot of linguistic production and it involves game-like elements and movement, which both can reduce the learners' stress. Jaakkola and Norrena (2016) discuss the importance of movement in their book about action-based methods. Jaakkola and Norrena emphasize that research findings have indicated for a long time that immobility in teaching contexts does not enhance learning. Jaakkola and Norrena (2016, 16-17) conclude that the effectiveness of action-based methods is partly based on the fact that they (action-based methods) increase pupils' movement and decrease immobility.

2.3.2 Learning through music

Some studies have created a link between music and language learning, and even the first language is often acquired partly through rhymes and songs (Fonseca Mora & Gant 2016; Salcedo 2002). Often children enjoy playing with new words and the melodies which accompany them, allowing them to develop their phonological, articulatory, creative and memory abilities (Fonseca Mora & Gant, 2016). According to Fonseca Morea and Gant (2016, 94) "The auditory development that children experience through musical interpretation boosts their awareness of the phonological aspects of the words that accompany them in addition to simulating memory due to the repetition of the musical and verse patterns." Music and rhymes are also highlighted in the national core curriculum for early language learning.

2.3.3 Learning through drama

According to Kotka (2016) stories and playing are combined in drama education. She elaborates that drama supports the pupils' creativity, since pupils learn through imagination in different situations either in roles or as themselves. Kotka (2016) states that in primary school drama can take the form of for example miming and acting and that through drama, concepts can be decoded by using body language. In a study about action-based teaching methods, Tampio and Tampio (2016) discuss the importance of learning through free play and experiencing. According to Tampio and Tampio, experiential learning can have a positive impact on learning as pupils are more easily motivated when playing and completing exercises outside, as they get to be the active agents.

In her book about drama sessions in primary schools, Day (2011) introduces ways how to implement drama into education. According to Day (2011), drama can help build confidence and self-esteem as drama provides children with an outlet to explore their imaginations through creative play. Day (2011, 1) states that "drama develops interpersonal skills through teamwork, role play and social interaction and it allows children to experiment and develop their verbal and non-verbal communication skills."

2.4 Prior studies

Before A1-language learning was added to the distribution of lessons hours for grades 1-2, a number of early language teaching projects were piloted across Finland. Huhta and Leontjev (2019) studied these early language education projects to find out how the teaching was conducted, as well as to shed light on the pupils, teachers and parents' views. Over 200 teachers shared their views on the early language teaching projects in the final report. When the teachers were asked about the materials used in early language teaching, a variety of sources were mentioned and these were roughly categorized into three categories; internet and social media, self-made or team-made materials and material provided by publishers like Otava and Sanoma Pro. A majority of the teachers reported that they did not use ready-made materials like textbooks in teaching and if they did, they altered the exercises to fit the pupils' needs. The study also found that early language teaching is taught by teachers from various

educational and linguistic backgrounds. Thus, the materials used in language teaching ought to be accessible to teachers of various backgrounds.

In a Polish study conducted about ELT materials for very young learners, Stec (2016) studied 22 kindergarten English teachers to find out their views and processes of implementing ELT materials. The results showed that the major tendency was to use coursebooks in teaching, which was followed by the use of toys and puppets as well as pictures. When the English teachers were asked to describe difficulties that they faced with the implementation of EFL materials, the biggest group of problems was linked with keeping discipline and children's short attention span (Stec, 2016).

For their master's thesis Tuupanen and Eskelinen (2018) interviewed classroom teachers about their views on early English language teaching and their roles as language educators. They interviewed 23 2nd grade teachers from Jyväskylä, who were mainly classroom teachers with no previous experience of English teaching. These teachers reported that they mostly used materials that they had found on the internet (e.g. Youtube, Facebook, Peda.net), whereas some teachers said that they had a license from the school to use ready-made learning materials and/or digital materials. Some teachers stated that they had not received any materials or licences from the school and thus had to search for teaching materials themselves. These teachers reported that they would have welcomed any ready-made materials with open arms, and that they were hoping to get more resources to buy learning materials. Action-based teaching methods and materials were the most popular among teachers. Songs and rhymes as a teaching method were praised since they require repetition which is seen as beneficial for the young learners. The teachers were hoping to get more materials that would be suitable for Finnish early language learners, since they stated that the material provided online was often too demanding and targeted for learners who had previous knowledge of the language.

Tomlinson (2008) studied materials used in early language teaching and gathered information of the most suitable teaching materials for young learners from teachers. 103 teachers answered his questionnaire about the most valued features in activities for young learners. Most respondents (62) preferred activities that were based on fun and enjoyment as well as

activities that emphasized listening and speaking. Heavily grammar-based activity types were the most disliked among the teachers. Tomlinson argues that as the children are still developing and learning it is important not to smother their excitement. Moreover, they should be motivated and encouraged. The respondents of Tomlinson's study (2008) emphasized that "materials should be at the appropriate cognitive and maturity level for the age of children".

3 Materials and Methods

The data for this study consists of two early English language learning materials, both of which include a pupils' textbook and the teacher's digital material. The two early English language learning materials, Otava's *Jump in* and Sanoma Pro's *Go*, are targeted for 1st and 2nd graders who are A1-English learners. As concluded in the theoretical background, the national core curriculum for early language learning suggests that learning should occur through songs, rhymes, drama, stories, games, pictures, movement, playing and other senses. Action-based and experiential learning are underlined as the base of every teaching method that is chosen. For this reason, I am going to analyse the two learning materials to see how these elements that are highlighted in the curriculum are presented in the materials provided by the authors. My main focus will be on the action-based exercises. The action-based exercises will be analysed qualitatively, as I will analyse their content and pedagogical elements. I will start by introducing Sanoma Pro's material and then continue with Otava's material.

3.1 Sanoma Pro's *Go*

Sanoma Pro's early English language learning material *Go* is targeted for 1st and 2nd graders and includes a pupils' textbook and digital teaching material for the teacher. On their website¹ it is stated that *Go* can also be used as extra or support material in teaching. Sanoma Pro provides Bingel online exercises for the pupils, which are based on the *Go* early English language learning material. However, as the pupils' online Bingel exercises are not included in the online digital material and are to be bought separately, I have not included them in my analysis. On Sanoma Pro's website *Go* is described as an exciting early English language learning material in which "language is practiced in a diverse manner by means of pictures, songs, games and action-based exercises". It is also mentioned on Sanoma Pro's website that "new words and phrases are learned through songs and action-based classroom activities"².

¹ <https://www.sanomapro.fi/go-varhennetun-englannin-opetusmateriaali/>

² Both quotes are the researchers' own translations.

3.1.1 *Go* pupils' textbook

The pupils' textbook consists of 15 six-page-long units which are titled: *Nice to meet you!*, *Welcome!*, *Good morning!*, *Big Ben*, *Hyde Park Fun*, *Ice Cream!*, *Ready for school*, *At school*, *Hobby day!*, *My lunch box*, *The school play*, *After school*, *Pet zoo*, *Let's play!* and *Ginger's week*. The pupils' textbook, which is instructed to be used in the first and second grade, is 97 pages long and has 191 exercises in total, each unit having an average of 12 exercises. Each unit starts with an illustration and a short audio that is listened to together in class. After the audio, vocabulary is practised through listening, repeating, singing and action-based exercises. The unit structure then usually introduces speaking and dialogue exercises, which are practiced and acted out with a partner. Pronunciation exercises are practiced through rhyming and repeating words after which a variety of exercises that test the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the given theme and vocabulary are introduced. On the last spread of each unit, vocabulary is practised through two to three exercises of which one is usually a game, and the units end with the pupil's self-evaluation exercise.

3.1.2 *Go* teacher's digital material

Sanoma Pro provides digital teaching material for the teacher, which follows the same structure as the pupils' textbook, but also includes the audios, correct answers and extra material for each unit, for example games, extra activities and modified exercises. A set of extra games is included in the teacher's digital material for each of the 15 units, and each game set covers the vocabulary and theme that has been practised in the given unit. Printable picture vocabulary and simple phrase and picture cards are provided in both Finnish and English as well as a set of action-based activity ideas to go with them. Two to five extra activity ideas to go with every unit are also provided in the guide.

3.2 Otava's *Jump in*

Otava's *Jump in* learning material consists of a pupils' textbook and a teacher's digital materials. According to Otava's website³, the book can also be used as extra material or support material, whilst it is still promoted as an early English language learning material for grades 1 and 2. On Otava's website, *Jump in* is advertised as "an exciting early English language learning material that makes English learning fun, action-based and interactive⁴." On the website, under the heading "*Jump in* in a nutshell", it is stated that "the material's games, playing and songs make English learning fun." It is noteworthy that elements such as games, songs and action-based exercises are mentioned in Otava's description of their material, suggesting that the publishers have also found these elements important.

3.2.1 *Jump in* pupils' textbook

Otava's *Jump in!* pupils' textbook consists of 14 six-page-long units titled *Hello, Numbers, Colours, This is me, Clothes, Family, Home, Food, I can, School, Hobbies, Animals, Moving around, Extra*. The pupils' textbook contains a total of 223 exercises. 206 exercises are included in the actual units and 17 exercises in the *Extra* unit. Each unit in the pupils' textbook thus includes an average of 17 exercises. Each unit starts with an audio that is to be listened to together and a small picture to go with the theme of the unit. The audio is usually followed with a listen and repeat exercise and at least one action-based exercise. New vocabulary is practised through a bingo game and one to two writing exercises. The second spread includes more listening exercises, at least one game, an action-based exercise and more writing exercises. If a sing along song is included in a unit, it is included in the second or the first spread of the unit. On the last spread of each unit there is at least one game and up to three writing exercises.

³ <https://oppimisenpalvelut.otava.fi/tuotteet/luokat-1-6/jump-in-ops-2016/>

⁴ The researchers' own translation.

3.2.2 *Jump in* teacher's digital material

The teachers' digital material follows the same structure as the pupils' textbook, but the material also includes audio, correct answers and extra material for each unit, for example games, nursery rhymes and picture vocabulary. Nursery rhymes for each unit are included in the teacher's digital material and for some of the nursery rhymes *Jump in* provides further instructions to make them more action based. It is mentioned that for the rhymes that are lacking further action-based instructions, the teachers could come up with any movement or action-based elements. However, as mentioned previously, only the exercises that include explicit instructions will be considered action-based in this study. Flip cards, picture vocabulary, dialogues and extra games are also provided in the teacher's guide. An extra unit titled *Festivals* in the teacher's digital material includes contents of five different festivals as well as songs and activities to go with them.

3.3 Methods of analysis

This study is conducted using a mixed method that has both qualitative and quantitative features. I am going to present and go through the action-based exercises that are provided both in the teacher's materials and the pupils' textbooks, but only those exercises provided in the pupils' textbooks will be analysed in further detail. The qualitative part of the analysis focuses on the action-based exercises that are studied in detail. I have analysed the nature and content of the action-based exercises to find out what kind of action-based exercises the early English language learning materials contain. The quantitative part consists of the analysis of the elements that are featured in the action-based exercises provided in the pupils' textbooks. The occurrences of the featured elements have been studied quantitatively so that a comparison of the two materials' action-based exercises can be achieved.

In this study I have defined action-based exercises as follows:

1. Action-based exercises require the learner's active participation and active thinking in the learning process.

2. Different learning tools and environments are utilized in action-based exercises to add variation to the more traditional scripted and teacher-led methods and exercises. Multisensory methods are utilized in action-based exercises.
3. Kinaesthetic learning is an important aspect of action-based methods and exercises. Games, free play and drama are also good examples of action-based methods and exercises that are suitable for young learners.
4. Action-based exercises can include elements such as singing, playing, games, drama, rhyming and movement.
5. In this study non action-based exercises are considered to be for example listening exercises, writing exercises, pronunciation exercises and drawing and colouring exercises that do not include movement, drama or playing.

In addition to games and playing, drama can provide children with an outlet to explore their imaginations through creative play, and in early language education drama usually takes the form of miming or acting out. Therefore, in this study acting out and miming are good examples of drama in action-based exercises. Rhymes and songs that require a simple choreography or drama are also good examples of action-based exercises. Adding movement to a song requires the learners active participation and active thinking in the learning process. As mentioned, games and free play are both considered to be action-based methods and exercises in this study. Games and action-based exercises have been analysed separately so that a more detailed analysis can take place. However, games are considered to be action-based exercises in this study and the two have only been separated in the analysis due to the large number of exercises that needed analysis. As the NCC (2020) and both of the publishers highlight elements such as movement, spoken interaction, music and drama, I will analyse the action-based exercises based on these elements to see which of these elements are featured in the action-based exercises. In addition, I will analyse the action-based exercises from the young learners point of view to find out whether reading and writing skills are required to complete the exercises. It is stated in the NCC (2020) that at the beginning of early language education the pupils are not required to know how to read and write. Drawing and colouring are often alternatives for writing and for this reason I have included them as one of my categories. Therefore, the categories which I will use in my analysis are:

- Movement
- Speaking
- Music (including songs and nursery rhymes)
- Drama
- Colouring/drawing
- Writing
- Reading

3.4 Limitations of the study

There are limitations to this study that need to be considered. Since an action-based exercise is not a straightforward concept to define, there are different views on the concept and what counts as an action-based exercise. I have designed a tailor-made categorisation for this thesis, as I could not find any prior studies on action-based exercises with comprehensive analysis models. However, there may be different views on what counts as an action-based method and which elements are most essential in such a method.

Both of the materials include extensive teacher's materials where the authors have provided a variety of extra materials, ideas for lesson structures and planning as well as suggestions on how to modify exercises to make them more action-based. The data that was provided in the teacher's digital material created some issues in terms of analysing the data, since some of the suggestions and ideas in the teacher's guide are not concrete exercises with detailed instructions. For this reason, only the action-based exercises that are provided in the pupils' textbooks have been analysed in detail.

4 Analysis

Exercises that are not action-based have not been analysed in further detail in this study, as my interests are mainly in action-based exercises. In this study non action-based exercises include scripted and teacher-led exercises. These can be for example writing exercises where the pupils are instructed to write, circle or draw the correct answers or listening exercises where the pupils are instructed to answer according to what they have heard in the audio. In contrast, in action-based exercises the pupils are the active agents as they are building their own understanding together with others, while using the resources that are provided in their environment. The goal of such exercises is to activate the learner physically as well as mentally, since the aim of the action-based method is to stimulate the pupils thought and learning process. Action-based learning can occur in groups or pairs, but also through independent work. My aim is to find out what elements the authors have viewed as essential and important to feature in their action-based exercises.

The following section presents my analysis and results of the action-based exercises in Sanoma Pro's *Go*, followed by Otava's *Jump in*. I will start my analysis with the action-based exercises provided in the pupils' textbooks, continue with games provided in the pupils' textbook and finish with the action-based exercises provided in the teacher's materials. The action-based exercises, including games that are provided in the pupils' textbooks have been analysed based on the elements that are featured in them. The categories that have been used in the analysis are listed above in section 3.3. The analysis section will finish with a summary of the findings and a comparison of the two learning materials.

4.1 Action-based exercises in *Go*

The following section presents my analysis of Sanoma Pro's early English language learning material *Go*. In my analysis I have included the action-based exercises that are provided in the pupils' textbook and the teacher's digital learning material. I will start with the action-based exercises and games that are provided in the pupils' textbook and finish with an analysis of the teacher's digital material.

4.1.1 Action-based exercises in the pupils' textbook

The *Go* pupils' textbook is 97 pages long and has 191 exercises in total, each unit having an average of 12 exercises. The authors have marked most of the exercises provided in the pupils' textbook with a descriptive logo. These logos indicate whether the exercise is for example a listening exercise or an action-based exercise. However, the authors' classification of activity types is at times illogical and for this reason I have analysed the exercises according to the categorisation that I have designed for this study.

A total of 26 exercises are marked with an action-based logo in the pupils' textbook. In an exercise that is not marked with an action-based logo the pupils are instructed to act out hobbies in turns whilst the other pair has to guess the correct hobby. I have analysed this as an action-based exercise since movement and drama are featured elements. In addition, two exercises where the pupils are instructed to interview their classmates and fill out an answer sheet according to the responses they get are provided in the textbook, but only the other one is marked with an action-based logo. I have analysed both of these as action-based exercises since they are similar in nature. A simple listen and repeat exercise that includes a dialogue with a partner is marked as an action-based exercise by the authors, even though the exercise is scripted, does not require for example movement or drama and the dialogue is provided for the learners. However, an exercise that precedes this exercise is marked as a listening exercise by the authors, even though it includes movement, as the pupils are instructed to listen to a list of hobbies and move in the classroom according to how much they like the given hobby. Movement to the front of the classroom means that you like the hobby a lot and movement to the back of the class means that you dislike it. It could be that the authors accidentally marked these exercises wrong, or they view them in a different light than the researcher. As stated before, the logos used by the authors are not useful indicators for me and for this reason I have not relied on the logos. In this study the scripted dialogue exercise is not considered as an action-based exercise, but the exercise that requires movement is categorized as an action-based exercise. The two exercises are illustrated in Figure 1.



3

Kuulet harrastuksia englanniksi. Liiku luokassa sen mukaan, pidätkö harrastuksesta vai et. Luokan edessä pidät harrastuksesta paljon, luokan takaosassa pidät harrastuksesta vain vähän.



4

Kuuntele ja toista. Harjoittele vuoropuhelua parisi kanssa. Vaihtakaa alleviivattua sanaa.

Do you play football?

No, I don't.

Yes, I do.

Figure 1: An example of logos used in *Go*

A total of 28 exercises in the *Go* pupils' textbook have the characteristics of an action-based exercise. The 28 action-based exercises and the elements that are featured in them are listed in Table 1. Table 1 also illustrates the number of exercises that featured a given element.

Table 1: Action-based exercises in *Go* pupils' textbook

Go	Movement 28/28	Speaking 17/28	Drama 8/28	Colouring/ drawing 6/28	Reading 5/28	Writing 5/28	Music 2/28
1.)	X	X					X
2.)	X	X			X	X	
3.)	X	X		X			
4.)	X	X		X			
5.)	X						
6.)	X	X		X	X		
7.)	X	X					
8.)	X						X
9.)	X	X				X	
10.)	X		X				
11.)	X	X	X				
12.)	X						
13.)	X	X			X	X	
14.)	X			X			
15.)	X	X	X				
16.)	X						
17.)	X						
18.)	X	X	X				
19.)	X		X				
20.)	X	X		X			
21.)	X	X	X				
22.)	X			X	X	X	
23.)	X		X				
24.)	X	X					
25.)	X		X				
26.)	X	X					
27.)	X	X					
28.)	X	X			X	X	

As seen in Table 1, movement is a featured element in each of the 28 action-based exercises, followed by speaking which is a featured element in 17 of the exercises. Eight of the 28 action-based exercises feature drama in the form of acting out and miming, whereas music is only included in two exercises. In these two exercises, the music is played in the background whilst the pupils perform another task. Various songs are present in the material as each unit includes a song that the pupils are instructed to sing along to. These exercises are not however action-based as the pupils are only instructed to listen to and repeat the song. Only five of the action-based exercises that are provided in the pupils' textbook require reading, but as

mentioned above *Go* provides alterations of some of their exercises that require reading comprehension. These alterations are provided in the teacher's material. Every exercise does however require that the teacher explains the instructions of the given exercise to the pupils prior to starting them.

4.1.2 Games in the pupils' textbook

A total of 17 out of 191 exercises are marked as games in the pupils' textbook, most of which are instructed to be played in pairs. In addition to the 17 exercises that are marked as games in the pupils' textbook, some exercises that are marked differently needed further analysis, since they had the characteristics of a game. These are two bingo games, one of which is not marked with any logo, and the other is marked with a listening exercise logo. Of the 17 exercises that are marked with a game logo, one is a bingo game where the students are instructed to colour ice cream cones with different colours, after which the teacher calls out different colours and the pupils are instructed to yell bingo once all of their colours have been said. The second bingo game in the textbook is not marked with any logo, but is very similar to the one mentioned above as the pupils are instructed to act as bingo hosts in turns, then choose any three words from a provided word list and once all their words have been said they yell bingo. I have categorized this exercise as a game, since it resembles the previously mentioned bingo game that is marked with a game logo. The third bingo game is marked as a listening exercise, since the audio is provided by the authors. The exercise is similar to the two aforementioned bingo games, so I have categorized it as a game making the total number of games provided in the pupils' textbook 19. Some of the exercises that are marked as action-based exercises are game-like, but it seems that the authors have classified the exercises that include a layout for the game (i.e. a track for a board game) as games, and the freer exercises as action-based exercises.

I have listed the games provided in the pupils' textbook and marked the elements that are featured in the games in Table 2. Table 2 also illustrates the number of exercises that featured a given element.

Table 2: Games in *Go* pupils' textbook

GO	Reading 16/19	Speaking 14/19	Movement 7/19	Drama 6/19	Drawing/ colouring 6/19	Writing 2/19	Music 0/19
1.)	X	X	X			X	
2.)	X				X		
3.)	X	X					
4.)	X	X					
5.)	X	X	X	X			
6.)	X	X	X	X			
7.)		X			X		
8.)					X		
9.)	X				X		
10.)	X				X		
11.)	X	X	X	X			
12.)	X	X					
13.)	X	X					
14.)	X						
15.)	X	X	X	X		X	
16.)	X	X	X	X			
17.)	X	X	X	X			
18.)	X	X					
19.)		X			X		

Go include a variety of elements in their 19 games, reading being the most featured element and writing and music being the least common. *Go* provides three games in their pupils' textbook where reading is not required, since in these exercises the pupils are provided with pictures rather than words, and they are given the option of drawing or colouring as opposed to writing. In the games where movement and drama are featured, the pupils have to act as required i.e. like an animal or mime a hobby whilst their partner tries to guess the correct answer. As seen in Table 2, movement and drama go mostly hand in hand as miming and acting also require movement. Below is an example of a game that requires movement but not drama.

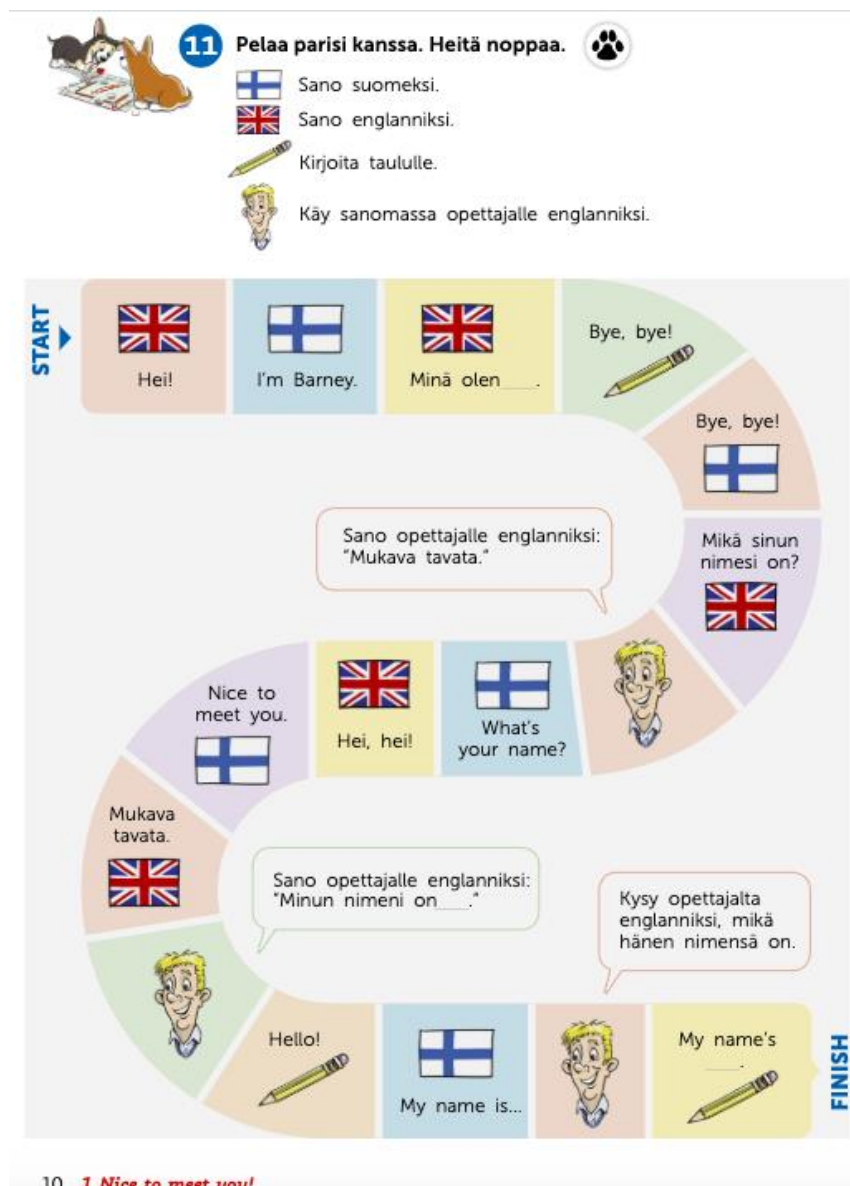


Figure 2: An example of a game in *Go*

As seen in Figure 2, the pupils are instructed to write on the chalkboard, go to their teacher and say the given phrase. This requires movement but not drama. Writing is the least prominent feature in Sanoma Pro's games as only two games require writing. Speaking and reading are the most prominent features, however *Go* provides alterations of the games that require reading comprehension in the teacher's material. In these alterations written text is substituted with pictures, so that pupils with low level reading skills can participate in the exercise. Movement and drama are present in just under half of the exercises, followed by colouring and drawing. In the games that require only colouring or drawing, the pupils are practising the picture vocabulary by colouring the correct pictures of the corresponding words. New vocabulary and short phrases are mostly practiced in the games.

4.1.3 Teacher's guide and extra material in *Go*

In *Go*'s digital teacher's material, a guide is provided for the teacher, which includes ideas for planning lessons and how to modify exercises to fit the pupils' needs and skills, as well as extra material and exercises for the pupils. The following instructions about the material's exercise types are provided in the first page of the teacher's guide:

Tehtävät tunnistat seuraavista logoista:



Figure 3: Descriptive logos indicating exercise types in *Go*

As seen in Figure 3, action-based exercises or “toiminnallinen aktiviteetti” are introduced as one of the five main exercise types. Further analysis on the learning materials showed that the logos used by the authors are illogical and many of the exercises in the materials are not marked with any logos. These non-marked exercises are mostly written exercises that test the pupils' knowledge on a given theme and vocabulary and contribute notably to the total number of exercises. In addition to this, many activities are a combination of different elements, as for example an action-based exercise could also entail listening and writing. The logos are thus mostly tools for the learners to help them recognize certain activity types, rather than the authors' comprehensive categorization of the activities.

In each unit of the teacher's digital material, a set of digital games that cover the vocabulary and theme of the given unit is provided. These are digital games that only one person can play at a time, so it is worth considering whether the pupils who are just observing someone else

play are participating in the game actively i.e. being active agents. For this reason, I have not analysed these digital games further. Ideas for lesson plans are provided in the guide, which include suggestions on how to go through certain exercises together, how to finish off and start a lesson, as well as ideas how to reflect on learning together with the pupils. Some of these suggestions include action-based elements, for example that vocabulary can be practiced by adding movement to a new word when the teacher says the new word the pupils have to perform the movement. As most of these activity ideas are only ideas and suggestions that are listed with bullet points in the guide without detailed and scripted instructions for the teachers, I have not analysed these as action-based exercises, nor have I analysed them further.

Not all of the extra activity ideas are vague, as some activities that are provided in the teacher's guide have detailed instructions and are not alterations of existing exercises in the pupils' textbook. Printable picture vocabulary cards and phrase cards with action-based activity ideas are provided in the teacher's guide. These activities are titled, *Oral word test*, *Board game*, *Anti-bingo*, *Find my word*, *Card hide*, *Blind man's bluff*, *Word of the day*, *Skill track*, *Word and phrase circle*, *Dice relay*, *Beanbag competition* and *Wall cards*. Vocabulary and simple phrases are practised in all of the aforementioned activities and most of the activity ideas include movement, whereas the remaining are traditional games like a memory game (find my word), anti-bingo, word of the day and an oral word test. The activity titled *Board game* features drama, as the pupils are instructed to act out the word that is on the card, and in *Blind man's bluff* learning occurs through different senses like the sense of sight and hearing. The total physical response method (TPR) is applied in three of the activities titled *Skill track*, *Wall cards* and *Beanbag competition*, as imperatives or single words are provided as input by the teacher or another pupil according to which the pupils have to act. In addition to the aforementioned extra activities, an action-based lesson plan that is instructed to be held outside during the springtime is provided in the guide. The lesson plan includes seven activities that all include movement, such as *Hopscotch*, *Jumping rope* and *Word tag*. In an activity titled *Find three red things* a teacher or a pupil who acts as an instructor asks the pupils to bring him or her for example three red things from nature or the schoolyard and present the items to the instructor as quickly as possible. The requested colour is changed as the game goes on.

The teacher's guide includes two to five activity ideas designed for each unit, most of which are action-based. As seen in Figure 4, various elements such as free play, drama and movement are featured in these activity ideas. Some of the activities such as *Adjective boards* support the pupils experiential learning, as the pupils' can freely choose pictures that they like, after which they reflect on their creations together.

Aktiviteettivinkkejä

- Piirrä parisi selkään jokin numero 1–10 väliltä. Parisi sanoo numeron englanniksi ääneen.
- Oppilaat sanovat toisilleen lukuja englanniksi. Pari kerää pöydälle luvun mukaisen määrän koulutavaroita.
- Jaa oppilaillesi numerot 1–10 (Liite 4A). Sano englanniksi ääneen laskutoimitus, esim. *one + two*. Oppilaat, joilla on kyseiset numerot, muodostavat parin ja sanovat laskutoimituksen tuloksen ääneen englanniksi: *three*.
- Jaa oppilaillesi numerot 1–10 (Liite 4A). Jokaista numeroa on kaksi kappaletta. Oppilaat etsivät parin, jolla on sama numero, kysyen: *How old are you?*

Aktiviteettivinkkejä

Pantomiimi sanaparilla

- Oppilaat toimivat pienissä ryhmissä. Opettaja on kirjoittanut taululle kuvasanaston sanat vasemmalle ja jo aiemmin opittuja sanoja oikealle puolelle taulua. Oppilaat valitsevat vuorotellen yhden adjektiivin ja yhden substantiivin ja esittävät sitä muille.

Esimerkiksi *a fast teacher, a sad teddy bear* tai *a hungry football*. Muiden tehtävänä on arvata, mitkä kaksi sanaa esittäjä on yhdistänyt.

Adjektiivitaulut

- Opettaja antaa luokalle isot kartongit, joihin jokaiseen kirjoitetaan otsikoksi yksi kuvasanaston sana. Oppilaiden tehtävänä on etsiä ja leikata lehdistä asioita, jotka kuvaavat kyseistä adjektiivia.

Figure 4: Activity ideas in *Go*'s teacher's guide

A variety of pedagogical elements are featured in *Go*'s action-based exercises, speaking being the most prominent element. Movement and drama are also featured frequently in both games and action-based exercises. Some of *Go*'s action-based exercises require reading and writing skills, reading being the more prominent feature. Music, songs and rhymes are the least featured pedagogical elements in *Go*'s action-based exercises.

4.2 Action-based exercises in *Jump in*

The following section presents my analysis of Otava's early English language learning material *Jump in*. In my analysis I have included the action-based exercises that are provided in the pupils' textbook and the teacher's digital learning material. I will start with the action-based exercises and games that are provided in the pupils' textbook and finish with an analysis of the teacher's digital material.

4.2.1 Action-based exercises in the pupils' textbook

Jump in provides two types of action-based exercises in the pupil's textbook; teacher's action cards and pupils' action cards. These action cards are action-based exercises that are marked in the pupils' textbook, but they are provided in the teacher's guide. The action cards are instructed to be printed out and laminated by the teacher. The teacher's action cards and the pupils' action cards do not differ in nature other than that the teacher cards are more teacher led. The pupils' action cards are instructed to be played in pairs or groups and freely chosen by the pupils. After completing an action card, the pupils are instructed to mark the finished exercise at the back of their book, where all the action cards and their titles are listed.

Short phrases and new vocabulary are mostly practised in *Jump in's* action-based exercises. Figures 5 illustrates typical action-based exercises provided in *Jump in*.



Figure 5: Action-based exercises in *Jump in*

A total of 23 pupil's action cards and 33 teacher's action cards are provided in the teacher's guide, making the total of action-based exercises provided in *Jump in* 56. Below I have listed the action-based exercises that are included in the pupils' textbook as the pupils' action cards in Table 3 and the teacher's action cards in Table 4. The action-based exercises were divided into two tables, due to the large number of exercises that are analysed. Tables 3 and 4 also illustrate the total number of exercises that featured a given pedagogical element.

Table 3: Action-based exercises in *Jump in* (pupils' action cards)

Jump in	Speaking 46/56	Movement 32/56	Drama 13/56	Colouring/ drawing 7/56	Reading 5/56	Writing 5/56	Music 1/56
1.)	X		X				
2.)	X						
3.)					X		
4.)				X	X	X	
5.)	X	X	X				
6.)	X					X	
7.)	X						
8.)	X	X	X				
9.)	X						
10.)	X			X			
11.)	X						
12.)	X	X					
13.)	X						
14.)	X				X		
15.)	X	X					
16.)	X			X			
17.)	X			X			
18.)	X						
19.)	X	X					
20.)	X	X					
21.)	X						
22.)	X						
23.)	X		X				

Table 4: Action-based exercises in *Jump in* (teacher's action cards)

Jump in	Speaking 46/56	Movement 32/56	Drama 13/56	Colouring/ drawing 7/56	Reading 5/56	Writing 5/56	Music 1/56
1.)	X	X	X				
2.)	X	X	X				
3.)	X						
4.)	X	X					
5.)	X	X			X		
6.)	X	X	X				
7.)	X	X		X			
8.)		X	X				
9.)	X	X					
10.)	X						
11.)		X					
12.)	X	X					
13.)	X	X					
14.)		X	X				
15.)	X	X					
16.)	X						
17.)	X	X					
18.)		X					
19.)		X				X	
20.)	X						
21.)	X						
22.)		X					
23.)	X	X					
24.)	X	X	X				
25.)	X	X		X			
26.)	X	X					X
27.)	X	X	X				
28.)	X	X				X	
29.)		X	X				
30.)	X	X					
31.)	X	X	X				
32.)	X				X		
33.)				X		X	

As seen in Table 3 and Table 4, speaking is the most prominent feature in *Jump in*'s action-based exercises followed by movement and drama. Music is featured in only one of the action-based exercises: music is played in the background and the pupils whilst the pupils are instructed to perform another task. Multisensory methods are utilized in *Jump in*'s action-

based exercises since in some of the activities pupils are instructed to write or draw a word with their finger on their partner's backs, while the other partner has to guess the correct answer. Drama is featured in 13 of the action-based exercises: the pupils are asked to mime or act out nouns and verbs. Action-based exercises that feature speaking and movement are the most typical combination. Drama is also typically featured with speaking and movement. Many of the action-based action cards have game-like features like competing in groups or pairs or counting points, but it seems that the authors wanted to distinguish between games and action-based exercises in their material.

4.2.2 Games in the pupils' textbook

A total of 28 exercises that are games are provided in the *Jump in* pupils' textbook, of which 13 are bingo games and 15 dice games. Some of the dice games are not specifically instructed to be played in pairs. However, it is quite likely that during the lessons the pupils would play with a partner or in groups. Each of the 13 regular units have a bingo game with pictures of the new words that have been introduced in the unit, making the exercise more accessible for learners who are still learning to read and write. I have listed the games that are provided in the *Jump in* pupils' textbook in Table 5 and marked the elements that are featured in the games. Table 5 also illustrates the number of exercises that featured a given element.

Table 5: Games in *Jump in* pupils' textbook.

Jump in!	Speaking 21/28	Reading 11/28	Drawing / colouring 10/28	Writing 5/28	Movement 1/28	Drama 1/28	Music 0/28
1.)	X						
2.)	X	X		X			
3.)	X	X	X				
4.)	X						
5.)		X	X	X			
6.)	X	X					
7.)	X						
8.)		X	X	X			
9.)	X	X					
10.)	X						
11.)	X						
12.)		X	X	X			
13.)	X	X		X			
14.)	X						
15.)			X				
16.)		X	X				
17.)	X						
18.)	X						
19.)	X						
20.)	X	X	X		X	X	
21.)	X						
22.)	X		X				
23.)	X						
24.)	X						
25.)	X						
26.)	X						
27.)			X				
28.)		X	X				

As seen in Table 5, the authors have kept the young learners in mind since almost half of the games they provide in their pupils' textbook do not explicitly require reading comprehension. These games are mostly bingo games with pictures rather than just words, which means that these bingos can be done with pupils who are still learning to read, without the teacher having to modify the game him or herself. The dice games mostly require speaking, drawing and writing. As seen in Table 5, only one of the 28 games features movement and drama. In addition to the bingo games, the book contains a few other games that do not explicitly

require reading comprehension, because in these games there is an option of drawing instead of writing, as seen in Figure 6.

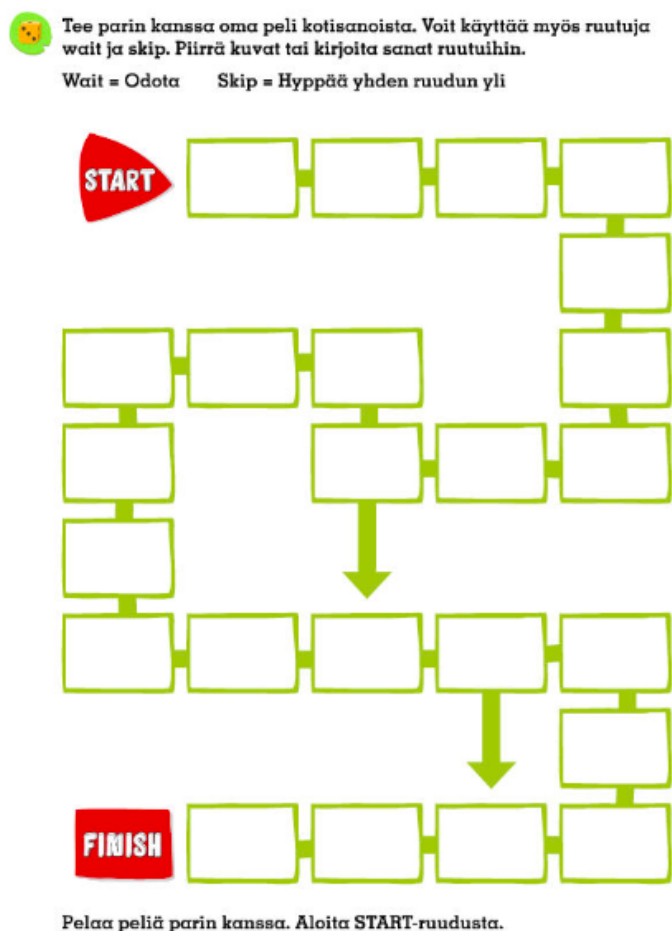


Figure 6: Example of a game in *Jump in*.

Every game does however require that the teacher explains the instructions of the exercise to the pupils before starting the exercise. In the games pupils mostly practice short phrases and new vocabulary.

4.2.3 Teacher's guide and extra material in *Jump in*

Jump in provides extra material and instructions, as well as lesson ideas in the teacher's digital material. The extra material includes for example printable action cards which contain various action-based exercises, self-assessment exercises for the pupils, printable picture vocabularies, nursery rhymes and extra games. The guide has marked the exercises with the following set of symbols:

Symbolit

Tehtävät on merkitty seuraavin symbolein:



kynä = kynätehtävä



kuuloke = kuuntelutehtävä



tiimalasi = opettajan toimintakortti-
tehtävä, oppilas toimii opettajan
ohjeen mukaan



pelikortit = oppilaan toimintakorttitehtävä;
oppilas valitsee parin/ryhmän kanssa
mieluisen tehtävän, suorittaa tehtävän ja
ympyröi kirjan takaa toimintakortti-sivulta
tekemänsä tehtävän



B = bingo



noppa = noppapeli



nuotti = laulu

Figure 7: Descriptive logos indicating exercise types in *Jump in*

As seen in Figure 7, action-based activities are not presented as one of the main exercise types. However, the two symbols that are described as “activity cards” are both action-based exercises, as are the exercises with bingo and dice game symbols. The activities that are marked with the pencil symbol are the most common exercises in Otava’s material. None of the exercises with pencil or listening logos are action-based. The song exercises that are marked with the note symbol are not action-based since they do not feature any action-based elements.

Nursery rhymes for each unit are included in the teacher’s digital material. Out of these 13 nursery rhymes the guide provides further action-based instructions for 10 rhymes. These instructions include adding movement or a different tone of voice whilst singing the song. For example, in a rhyme titled *Let’s put on our socks* the pupils are instructed to act out different things in different verses. It is mentioned that for the rhymes that are lacking further action-based instructions the teachers can come up with any movement or action-based elements, but as mentioned previously only the exercises that include detailed instructions are considered

action-based exercises in this study. If the authors provide vague suggestions or a list of ideas with bullet points on how to alternate exercises, they are not considered as action-based exercises in this research.

4.3 A comparison of *Go* and *Jump in*

In the teacher's guide both of the series provide descriptions of the exercise types that are included in the materials. In both of the materials, action-based exercises and games are marked as separate exercise types. Even though the lists of exercise types are probably not meant as a comprehensive categorisation of exercise types, they suggest that both sets of authors view action-based exercises as important. A comprehensive teacher's digital material is provided by both of the series with various extra materials. *Go*'s authors include the action-based exercises in the pupils' textbook, whereas *Jump in*'s authors provide the action-based exercises in the teacher's digital material. In *Jump in* the action-based exercises are marked in the pupils' textbook, but the actual exercises and their instructions are provided in the teacher's digital material.

4.3.1 Elements featured in the action-based exercises

The elements that are featured in the two materials' action-based exercises are varied. *Go* has 191 exercises in the pupils' textbook out of which 28 are action-based exercises. *Jump in* has a total of 223 exercises in the pupils' textbook out of which 56 are action-based exercises. In *Go*, movement is a featured element in each of the 28 action-based exercises. However, movement is featured in only 33 out of the 56 action-based exercises in *Jump in*'s pupils' textbook. Drama is a featured element in 8 of the 28 action-based exercises in *Go*, whereas drama is featured in 13 of the 56 action-based exercises. Nevertheless, movement and speaking are the two most prominent elements that are featured in both of the materials' action-based exercises.

Jump in has 28 exercises that are games in their pupils' textbook and *Go* has 19 exercises which are games. Drama is a featured element in only one of the 28 games that are included in *Jump in*, which is notably lower than in *Go* as out of their 19 games 6 feature drama. In addition, only one of the 28 games in *Jump in* feature movement, which is noticeably lower compared to the games in *Go*, of which 7 out of 19 feature movement. Thus, the games are slightly more complex in *Go*, since different elements such as drama and movement are more often present in their games than in *Jump in*. The difference in featuring movement especially in games is quite striking between the two materials as *Jump in*'s games feature movement noticeably less than *Go*'s games. *Go* provides more varying learning methods and tools in their action-based exercises, as the action-based exercises are slightly more complex in *Go*, since a variety of pedagogical elements are featured in them. On the other hand, *Jump in* provides more action-based exercises in total, meaning that the pupils' and the teachers can practice and alternate between the exercises more.

5 Discussion

This chapter discusses the results of this thesis and I will answer the research questions set in the introduction. First, I will look at the results for *Go*, following with *Jump in* and ending with a comparison of the two.

The research questions were the following:

- (1.) What kind of action-based exercises are provided in *Jump in* and *Go* early English language learning materials?
- (2.) What pedagogical elements are most prominent in the action-based exercises?
- (3.) How do the two learning materials differ from each other?

Both materials introduce action-based exercises as one of the main exercise types in the teacher's guides where a set of symbols are provided for different exercise types. In addition, they both include games as an exercise type of its own in the pupils' textbook, so they separate games and action-based exercises as their own exercise types. Both series include a variety of pedagogical elements in their action-based exercises. Action-based exercises aim to add variation to learning and teaching methods, and for this reason the action-based exercises provided in the two series are mostly playful and game-like.

In the analysis section action-based exercises are categorised according to the pedagogical elements that are featured in them. The result of the analysis show that there is variation and differences in the elements that are featured in the action-based exercises. Movement and speaking are the most common elements in both of the material's action-based exercises, whereas music is the least prominent. The lack of music in the action-based exercises is surprising considering that the NCC (2020) highlights the importance of including music in early language teaching. Reading and speaking are typical elements in both of the materials' games. In *Jump in's* games, reading and speaking are followed by writing and colouring, whereas in *Go's* games most prominent features after reading and speaking are movement and drama. Drama and movement are featured more often in *Go's* games than they are in *Jump in's* games, since of *Jump in's* 28 games only one includes movement, when movement is

present in 7 of *Go*'s 19 games. This difference in featuring movement in games is quite striking, since kinaesthetic learning is an important aspect of the action-based method.

Tomlinson (2008) studied teachers and materials used in early language teaching. 103 teachers answered his questionnaire about the most valued features in exercises for young learners of which most (62) preferred activities that were based on fun and enjoyment. The most disliked activities in his study were heavily grammar-based activities. In *Jump in* and *Go*'s action-based exercises the textbooks are rarely required as the exercises are often separate games or tasks that do not require the pupils to sit at their desk with their textbooks. In a study about early language teaching projects conducted in Finland, Huhta and Leontjev (2019, 25) found that most teacher they interviewed valued action-based methods in early language teaching and highlighted the importance of practicing spoken language and interaction skills. When these teachers were asked what kind of exercises they used in early language teaching games, kinaesthetic exercises, songs, nursery rhymes and drama were mentioned (Huhta & Leontjev 2019, 29).

One of the interests of this study was the accessibility of the learning materials, as the materials are targeted for young learners who according to the NCC (2020) are not expected to know how to read and write when starting early language learning in the first grade. *Go* provides some alterations of games and action-based exercises in the teacher's material in which text is replaced by pictures so that these exercises are more accessible for lower-level readers. *Go*'s action-based exercises do not however require much reading comprehension as only 5 of the 28 action-based exercises in the pupils' textbook require reading skills. Out of the 56 action-based exercises that are provided in *Jump in*, only 5 require reading skills, meaning that most of the action-based exercises are accessible for young learners. Games require more reading as 11 out of 28 games in *Jump in*'s textbook require reading comprehension. In *Jump in*, bingo games with pictures rather than just words are provided in every unit. However, 16 out of the 19 games that are provided in *Go*'s pupils' textbook require reading skills. *Jump in* thus provides more accessible games for young learners in their pupils' textbook than *Go*. It is noteworthy that most of the non-action-based exercises in both of the materials are written exercises that test the pupils' knowledge on a given theme and vocabulary and contribute notably to the total number of exercises.

Music was the least prominent element in both of the materials' action-based exercises and games. According to the NCC (2020), songs, music and rhymes should be utilized in early language learning. Both *Jump in* and *Go* include sing along songs in their pupils' textbooks, but they are not action-based as the pupils are instructed to only listen and repeat the song. However, *Jump in* does provide action-based nursery rhymes in their teacher's material. I have not analysed the nursery rhymes in further detail, since my focus was on the exercises provided in the pupils' textbooks. Due to the low number of exercises featuring music, more action-based exercises that feature music, songs and rhymes ought to be included in the early language learning materials. Previous studies have reported that teachers favour songs and rhymes as activity types for young learners, since they require repetition (Tuupanen & Eskelinen, 2018). The non-action-based sing along songs that are featured in both of the textbooks could be easily modified into action-based exercises if for example movement or drama would be added into the instructions provided in the pupils' textbooks.

Even though a variety of extra materials and lesson plan ideas are provided in both of the materials' teacher's guides, it is worth questioning whether all teachers have the time and drive to thoroughly familiarise themselves with the extensive teacher's materials. For this reason, I decided to analyse only the pupils' textbooks in detail since it is the product that the learners use and are provided with. It is up to every teacher to decide whether to implement the suggestions and extra materials that are provided in the teacher's guide in their teaching.

6 Conclusion

The aim of this research was to find out what pedagogical elements are featured in *Jump in* and *Go*'s action-based exercises. The study revealed that even though various elements are featured in both of the materials action-based exercises, some elements have more emphasis than others. Music is the least featured element in the action-based exercises and speaking is the most prominent pedagogical element. This thesis also gave an insight on the variability and accessibility of action-based exercises provided by two major publishers as the action-based exercises were analysed from the young learners' perspective. Most action-based exercises are easy to design in a way that they do not require reading or writing skills, but the learning materials as a whole ought to be analysed from a young learners' perspective as over half of the exercises were non action-based. A large number of extra material and lesson plan ideas are provided in both of the publishers' teacher's material. To gain more knowledge about the suitability and accessibility of the materials, classroom observation and teacher interviews would be in place.

The research design used in this thesis served the needs of this study as the analysis of the action-based exercises shed more light on the pedagogical elements featured in them. Quantitative analysis of the two materials would provide more information about the number of action-based exercises compared to the non-action-based in the materials. However, as my interests were mainly on the pedagogical elements featured in the action-based exercises, this research design served the purposes of this study.

As early language learning in grades 1 and 2 is still a new phenomenon, more research needs to be conducted on the topic. It would be interesting to conduct a new study to see what materials, if any, are being used in early language teaching in Finnish schools and what benefits do the ready-made materials provided by publishers have, in comparison to the self-made materials? I am also interested to know how many teachers in Finland use *Jump in* and *Go* in early English language teaching.

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